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York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office Recovers Gun From Student on School Bus

On Thursday, April 6, 2006 around 2:30 pm, the York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office received a call from a parent of a student that had just gotten off a school bus stating that another student had pointed a gun at him and a friend. The victims, (both age 13) had been involved in a dispute with a third student on the bus. The suspect (age 15) was not involved in the dispute, but was a friend of the third student, and he intervened by pointing a gun at the two. This ended the dispute. After exiting the bus, the two victims told a parent about the gun. The parent called 911. A dispatcher was able to contact the bus driver by radio and advised her to pull over in the Heritage Square Shopping Center, telling her that a deputy needed to speak with her. The deputy boarded the bus, advised her of the situation, and then proceeded to identify the suspect student. The deputy approached the suspect and discovered a handgun on the seat next to the student. A .22 caliber semi auto handgun was seized. The gun had been stolen the night before during a burglary from a neighbor of the suspect student. The students are enrolled at Grafton School Complex and were returning from New Horizons in Newport News.

Sheriff Diggs credits the county's new radio system as being instrumental in being able to resolve the situation quickly. "We were able to contact the bus driver quickly, and give her instructions. Before the new radio system, it would have been necessary to first find the bus, and then stop it using blue lights and siren. The stop was made without elevating the suspicions of the suspect."

A 15-year-old male was taken into custody and charged with Burglary, Grand Larceny, Possession of a Firearm on School Property, Possession of a Firearm by a Minor, and two counts of brandishing a firearm. The juvenile was placed in detention at the Merrimac Center.

Sheriff Diggs said, "The victims and the parent acted quickly and helped us recover a gun from a student on a school bus. They are commended for calling us, telling us what they knew, and thereby making our schools safer"

Provided by the York – Poquoson Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit